

Rep. Pastor: \$1 million grant awarded for

Phoenix -Tucson passenger rail project

WASHINGTON -- The Arizona Department of Transportation has received a \$1 million grant to help fund a study for a new intercity passenger rail service linking greater metropolitan Phoenix and Tucson, announced U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz.

Pastor, who was influential in securing the funding, said he was "pleased that the Federal Railroad Administration chose Arizona's project for funding as a commuter rail will help ease congestion in our growing state."

The grant was awarded under the Fiscal Year 2008 Capital Assistance to States - Intercity Passenger Rail Service Program through the U.S. Department of Transportation. A total of 15 awards, ranging in value from \$62,500 to \$6 million were announced today. Matching funds of \$1million would come from the state of Arizona, local, tribal and private funds.

The grant program's goal is to create federal-state intercity passenger rail capital investment

partnerships. In February, Pastor met with officials from the Arizona Department of Transportation, railroad representatives, elected officials and several agencies to urge them to apply for funding.

The funding will be used by ADOT to conduct the first year of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the "Sun Corridor" linking Phoenix and Tucson. The service would generally follow the Union Pacific Railroad line using Federal Railroad Administration-compliant diesel-powered trains. As many as 15 stations are planned over the 140-mile length. Existing track may be upgraded or new track may be built in existing rail corridors; or new corridors may be developed where state land or smart growth opportunities exist. The EIS will address improvements at many of the 150 grade crossings, both public and private.

Upon completion, projections show the rail service could carry about 1.2 million passengers annually.